



TANG, Wen-Chih (1865 ~ 1954)

Wen-chih Tang was born on October 16, 1865 of the Lunar Calendar in Chenyang County, Taitung Prefecture, Chiangsu Province. Coming from a poor family, at night he read books by moonlight so his vision was impaired by the age of seven. This was also the reason why he eventually became completely blind.

By the age of 14, he had completed the Five Classics and at 16 was placed 6th in the enrolment exam for Taitung Prefectural School. At the age of 18, he traveled to Nanjing for the provincial examination and was ranked 20th-place provincial graduate. At the age of 21, he graduated from Nanjing Academy in Chiangyin having made much progress in his study of the classics and critical interpretation. He began editing the *Ju Ching Tang Wen Chi* at the age of 23 and this is why his students referred to him as "Master Juching". In 1892, Tang was ranked 31st-place metropolitan graduate and qualified for supervisory positions. He was assigned by lot to the Ministry of Revenue (what is today the Ministry of Finance). There he was mentored by Weng Tung-he and also studied under Shen Tseng-chih. At the age of 32 (1896), Tang was accepted into the Office of Foreign Affairs (predecessor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) after coming in second-place in the competitive examinations and this marked his entry into government service.

In 1902, Tang accompanied special emissary Tai Chen (the son of Prince Yi Kuang) on a journey to Great Britain to attend the coronation of King Edward VII. During this time, he also visited Belgium, France, the United States and Japan.

Tang returned to China at the urging of his mother in 1906, and in the late summer of the following year was appointed to head the school in Shanghai. Here he discovered his true calling in education and never returned to government. Soon after his arrival, Tang began setting up lectures for German, French and Latin. He also set up a Chinese tutorial that he personally lectured every Sunday. While he was at the school, the local gentry in Chiangsu sought to nominate him for the position of Director-General of Civil Affairs. Tang was so committed to education that he refused to take office and insisted on continuing to serve as the school president.

In 1920, the second year of the May 4th Movement, Tang decided to resign due to his deteriorating eyesight. As he was appointed in 1907, he was the president of the school for

thirteen years in total. To commemorate his contribution to the school, his students had the Wenchih Hall built on campus.

After resigning as the school president, he continued to lecture in the Chinese Studies Center. He was so devoted to teaching that he even evacuated inland with the school at over 70 years of age after the July 7 Incident. When the Nationalist Government relocated to Taiwan, he stayed in China because he was very old and had been blind for some time. Tang eventually passed in 1954 at the age of 90.

(Source: "Architect of NCTU's Tradition of Excellence: Tang Wen-Chih (1865 ~ 1954)" by Chen Chiao-Yi, Class of '98, Industrial Engineering and Management).

